

AL-V-B-082  
Wills Creek Pottery  
Main Street, Ellerslie  
Ca. 1875

Situated near the railroad tracks in Ellerslie and now known as "Wills Creek Pottery", the place was once a large producer of firebrick and had much to do with the development of the town. Built around 1875, this one-story, brick structure features a stepped parapet on the gable ends. This facility played a big part in the cultural and industrial growth of Allegany County during the late 1800's.

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Wills Creek Pottery

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Ellerslie

☒ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Allegany

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☐ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☒ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

James W. Murphy Sr. (Murphy's Furn. Mart, Inc. )

Telephone #: 722-8093

STREET &amp; NUMBER

407 Washington Street

CITY, TOWN

Cumberland

☒ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland, 21502

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Allegany County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

30 Washington Street

CITY, TOWN

Cumberland

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

AL-V-B-082

**CONDITION**

☐ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

**CHECK ONE**

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

**CHECK ONE**

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The Wills Creek Pottery Company Building is located on the east side of Main Street in Ellerslie, Allegany County near the Pennsylvania State line.

The building basically consists of a one story rectangular shaped brick structure laid in American common bond. A one story shed roof addition abuts the main block on the northeast side. The facade is supported by a brick foundation with no water table. The roof of the structure is gabled and is covered with replaced asphalt materials. Gable ends feature a stepped parapet while the eaves exhibit a frieze and soffit. Supporting wall features on the building include pilasters and corbeled panels between pilasters on the sides. Windows in the structure exhibit double hung wooden sash frames with one-over-one lights and are found only on the front shed roof addition. The main entrance is found on the northwest side of the addition and a large, sliding, transportation door is found on the front northeast side of the main block. A small shed roof hood supported by brackets is placed over the main entrance. Two chimneys are found within the facade; one being a replaced, circular metal chimney located on the inside end of the northwest side, and the other being a brick chimney located on the outside northeast end of the addition.

The building is structually sound but has been somewhat altered since original construction when it was used as a fire clay and pottery shop.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES Ca. 1875

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Isaac Reese et al

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Tracing the ownership of a local industry can bring light to the development of the small town in which it was located. This is true in the case of Will's Creek Pottery and Ellerslie, Maryland.

The tract of land on which this industry stood was bought by Samuel Tomlinson from his father John in 1816 and was known as "Nothing Left." <sup>1</sup> The Tomlinson family was a prominent family of the area whose members built two more substantial brick houses there, the Lybarger and Umstot brick houses. (See AL-V-B-086 and AL-V-B-087)

In 1832 three hundred acres of "Nothing Left" was sold to John Buchanan. <sup>2</sup> He held the property until 1873 when Ellerslie was becoming "an important rail center" serving the Pittsburg and Connellsville Railroad (then the Pittsburg, Washington, and Baltimore Railroad) and later the Western Maryland Railroad. <sup>3</sup> Buchanan sold seven and a half acres of "Nothing Left" to investors from Pittsburg headed by Isaac Reese. <sup>4</sup> Probably attracted by the ideal location near the railroad these Pittsburg men constructed the Empire Firebrick Company or Works in 1875. <sup>5</sup>

During the later half of the nineteenth century Allegany County's iron production steadily declined. The beginning of the Firebrick industry at about this time provided more enduring livelihood for local laboregs. Mount Savage's Firebrick establishment was the largest in the County. <sup>6</sup>

Mr. Reese and his associates sold their business after only a few years to the Gardner brothers and a Mr. Stuart, who were also from Pittsburg. They changed the name of the company to the Cumberland Firebrick Works. <sup>7</sup> At this time the company employed several hundred men and did much to insure the development of Ellerslie. <sup>8</sup> In 1877 the Gardner brothers bought Mr. Stuart's share of the business and renamed it the Gardner Brothers' Firebrick Company. It remained in the Gardner family until 1910 when it was sold to the celebrated local businessman Andrew Ramsey. <sup>9</sup>

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Thomas, James, W., and Williams, T.J.C. History of Allegany County, Md.  
Philadelphia: Titsworth and Co., 1923  
Allegany County Land Records Cumberland, Maryland 21502  
Allegany County Mortgage Records  
Stegmaier, Jr., Harry. Allegany County-A History. Parsons, W.Va.:  
McClain Printing, Co., 1976

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.09

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John Nelson , William Pratt and Dave Dorsey

ORGANIZATION

Allegany County Historic Sites Survey

DATE

6/16/77

STREET & NUMBER

507 National Highway

TELEPHONE

777-5967

CITY OR TOWN

La Vale

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

Continuation of AL-V-B-082 - Will's Creek Pottery Company.

Ramsey was the owner of the Mount Savage firebrick industry. His acquisition of the Ellerslie plant provided a large increase in the output of enameled brick, fancy facing brick, sanitary ware, and pottery.<sup>10</sup> Ramsey overextended his business ventures and mortgaged his businesses to a Baltimore bank in 1923.<sup>11</sup> Like an ominous precedent of the stock market crash and business failures of October 1929, Ramsey's company collapsed in March of that year and the Ellerslie company was sold to a Baltimore company who renamed it the Ellerslie Pottery Company.<sup>12</sup>

During the height of the depression this company lasted a little more than a year when it was sold along with all machines, tools, kilns, and clay mines and renamed the Maryland Pottery Company.<sup>13</sup> In 1947 the establishment was again sold and renamed the Old Savage Firebrick Company.<sup>14</sup> Between 1923 and 1930 the building had changed hands four times, a fact that reflects much of the uncertainty felt by businessmen and local laborers during the depression.

In April of 1952 Morris Horvitz bought the company and from this point on there is no evidence of continued production. This is indicative of the general business decline of Allegany County that has continued to this day. The structure has been sold four times since 1952.

The one-story brick structure features a stepped parapet on the gabled ends and a frieze and soffit in the eaves. The side walls of the structure are supported by pilasters.

The records of Will's Creek Pottery is a reflection of the history of economic activity in Allegany County. An important factor in the development of the small town in which it was situated, this building is a reminder of man's relation to and use of his natural environment, and of the cultural and industrial heritage of Allegany County.

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1. Allegany County Land Records (Liber J, Folio 52)
  2. Ibid (Liber P, Folio 477)
  3. Harry Stegmaier, Jr., Allegany County-A History (Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Printing, Co., 1976) p. 211
  4. Land Records (Liber 44, Folio 462)
  5. Ibid (Liber 47, Folio 566)
  6. Stegmaier et al p. 210
  7. Land Records (Liber 47, Folio 566 and Liber 49, Folio 441)
  8. Stegmaier et al p. 210

CONTINUATION

Footnotes - Wills Creek Pottery Company AL-V-B-082

9. Land Records (Liber 106, Folio 493)
10. Thomas, James, W., and Williams, T.J.C. History of Allegany County, Maryland (Philadelphia: Titsworth and Co., 1923) p. 1047
11. Allegany County Mortgage Records (Liber 85, Folio 504)
12. Ibid
13. Land Records (Liber 163, Folio 214)
14. Ibid (Liber 213, Folio 584)

TITLE SEARCH

Wills Creek Pottery Company  
AL-V-B-082

Allegany County Deed: Liber 486, Folio 784  
Grantee: Murph's Furniture Mart Date: June 15, 1976  
Grantor: Lenny's Car Wash Inc. Consideration: Near \$5,000.00  
Notes: Brickyard Lot - Log House Lot  
Pottery Co. on first parcel

Allegany County Deed: Liber 484, Folio 633  
Grantee: Lenny's Car Wash Date: March 11, 1976  
Grantor: Lenny Kline Consideration: Over \$4,000.00

Allegany County Deed: Liber 482, Folio 198  
Grantee: Leonard Kline Date: Oct. 29, 1975  
Grantor: Halreat Realty Co. Consideration: Over \$3,000.00

Allegany County Deed: Liber 308, Folio 237  
Grantee: Halreat Realty Co. Date: March 16, 1959  
Grantor: Morris Horvitz Consideration: \$14,500.00

Allegany County Deed: Liber 240, Folio 106  
Grantee: Morris Horvitz Date: April 23, 1952  
Grantor: Clifford O. Albright et ux Consideration: \$8,000.00

Allegany County Deed: Liber 213, Folio 584  
Grantee: Clifford O. Albright et ux Date: Feb. 20, 1947  
Grantor: Old Savage Firebrick Co., Inc. Consideration: \$8,000.00

Allegany County Deed: Liber 163, Folio 257  
Grantee: Maryland Potteries Corp. Date: May 20, 1930  
Grantor: Hugh Stevenson et ux  
Notes: Changed name from Old Savage Firebrick Co., Inc. includes  
machinery, tools, kilns, claymines, etc.

Allegany County Deed: Liber 163, Folio 214  
Grantee: Hugh Stevenson et ux Date: May 7, 1930  
Grantor: Ellerslie Pottery Co.  
Notes: Changed name from Ellerslie Potteries Co. to Maryland Potteries Co.

Allegany County Deed: Liber 160, Folio 331  
Grantee: Ellerslie Pottery Co. Date: March 12, 1929  
Grantor: Frank LaPorte (Trustee) for Mercantile Trust and Deposit Co.  
of Baltimore, Maryland

Allegany County Mortgage Records: Liber 85, Folio 504  
Grantee: Mercantile Trust and Deposit Co. of Baltimore Date: Feb. 28, 1923  
Grantor: Andrew Ramsey Co.  
Notes: Ramsey mortgaged Co. to Mercantile Trust



Title Search continued for Wills Creek Pottery Company - AL-V-B-082

Allegany County Deed: Liber 106, Folio 493  
Grantee: Andrew Ramsey Corp. Date: Aug. 10, 1910  
Grantor: William Gardner et al  
Notes: Includes kilns, buildings, tools.

Allegany County Deed: Liber 62, Folio 134  
Grantee: James Gardner Date: Jan. 29, 1884  
Grantor: William Gardner et ux ( $\frac{1}{2}$  interest)  
Notes: Being part of a tract called "Nothing Left"  
Sometime in 1884 firm of Gardner Brothers' was dissolved

Allegany County Deed: Liber 49, Folio 441  
Grantee: William Gardner and James Gardner Date: Nov. 19, 1877  
Grantor: William Stuart et al  
Notes: Cumberland Firebrick Works

Allegany County Deed: Liber 47, Folio 566  
Grantee: Gardner Brothers and Stuart (from Pittsburg) Date: Aug. 25, 1876  
Grantor: Isaac Reese et al Consideration: \$15,000.00  
Notes: Empire Firebrick Co. or Works  
Pittsburg and Connelville Railroad

Allegany County Deed: Liber 44, Folio 462  
Grantee: Isaac Reese et al (from Pittsburg) Date: Oct. 18, 1873  
Grantor: John M. Buchanan et ux Consideration: \$666.67 cash  
Notes: "Nothing Left" two promissory notes for \$666.67 each  
Pittsburg, Washington and Baltimore Railroad Company

Allegany County Deed: Liber p, Folio 477  
Grantee: John M. Buchanan Date: Jan. 28, 1832  
Grantor: Samuel Tomlinson et ux Consideration: \$3,000.00  
Notes: 300 Acres

Allegany County Deed: Liber J, Folio 52  
Grantee: Samuel Tomlinson Date: Sept. 14, 1816  
Grantor: John Tomlinson (Father) Consideration: \$600.00  
Notes: 300 Acres

INVENTORY NO: AL-V-B-082

DATE: 6/16/77

REMODELING: Drastic, moderate, minor

486/784  
3.09 Acres

NAME OF PROPERTY: Wills Creek Pottery

LOCATION OF PROPERTY: Ellerslie

DIRECTION DWELLING FACES: Northeast

NAME OF OWNER: James W. Murphy Sr. and wife (Murphy's Furniture Mart, Inc.)

ADDRESS: 407 Washington Street 722-8093  
Cumberland, Maryland 21502

SERIES: 1( ☒ ) 2( ☐ ) 3( ☐ ) 4( ☐ ) 5( ☐ ) 6( ☐ ) BAYS: 1( ☐ ) 2( ☐ ) 3( ☐ ) 4( ☐ ) 5( ☐ ) 6( ☐ ) 7( ☐ ) ( ☐ )

ADDS, ADDITIONS:

DWELLING SHAPE: (square, cross, rectangular)

WALL CONSTRUCTION:

- ( ☐ ) FRAME: Bevel, clapboard, weatherboard, wood shingles, board & batten (type?)  
( ☒ ) BRICK: Bond type - common, English, Flemish. Sketch variants. 6/1  
( ☐ ) STONE: Bond type - rubble, ashlar (random or regular), quoins-plain, rusticated  
( ☐ ) LOG  
( ☐ ) OTHER: Coverings

WALL FEATURES: Belt Course, Pilasters, Others Corbelling

FOUNDATIONS: High, Low, Brick, Stone

WATER TABLE: None, Plain, Beveled, Moulded Brick

WINDOWS, TRIM, SHUTTERS: 1/1( ☒ ) 2/2( ☐ ) 6/6( ☐ ) 9/6( ☐ ) 9/9( ☐ ) other( ☐ )  
pegged( ☐ ) nailed( ☒ ) wide( ☐ ) narrow( ☐ ) mitred( ☐ ) pediment( ☐ )

ENTRANCE, DOORS: LOCATION: Northeast  
HARDWARE: original( ☐ ) replaced( ☐ )  
FAN LIGHT, TRANSOM, SIDE LIGHTS, PLAIN Large warehouse door  
Paneled, Verticle, Horizontal Boards

CORNICE, BARGE, EAVES: (crown, fascia, soffit, bed) parapets  
original( ☐ ) replaced( ☐ ) rafter ends, modillions, dentils, frieze, architrave

ROOF: Gable front, Gable flank, Hip, Shed, Mansard, Gambrel, Flat, Dormers #             
MATERIAL: wood shingles, slate, tin, asphalt; original( ☐ ) replaced( ☒ )

PORCHES: SHAPE OF ROOF - shed( ☐ ) hip( ☐ ) gable( ☐ )

CHIMNEYS: Number: 1 Brick( ☒ ) Stone( ☐ ) Corbeled( ☐ ) original( ☐ ) replaced( ☐ )  
Location: Flush end( ☐ ) Inside end( ☐ ) Outside end( ☒ ) Central( ☐ ) Interior( ☐ )

ARCHES: Door & Windows: Keystone, Flat, Segmental, Semicircular

COMMENTS:

USE: Vacant (for sale)  
SIGNIFICANCE: Industry  
DATE CONSTRUCTED: Ca. 1875  
CONDITION: Fair

# I N T E R I O R

## FLOOR PLAN:

- ( ) CENTRAL HALL: Two rooms, each side; double parlor, one side
- ( ) SIDE HALL: One room deep, two rooms deep
- ( ) IRREGULAR

## STAIRWAYS:

- ( ) ENCLOSED: Single flight, two flights with landing
- ( ) OPEN: Single flight, two flights - one landing, three flights - two landings
- ( ) DOG-LEG
- ( ) DOG-LEG with WINDERS
- ( ) SPIRAL
- ( ) ROUNDED
- ( ) SIMULTANEOUS

## WALL FINISH:

- ( ) PLASTER
- ( ) paneled: original; replaced
- ( ) BOARD PARTITION: baseboard, cornice, chair rail, wainscot

## FIREPLACES:

NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION: parallel to walls, diagonal

MANTELS: wood mouldings, pilasters, columns, masonry, marble

DOORS: paneled, board and batten, flush

HARDWARE: original; replaced

## DOOR & WINDOW TRIM:

- ( ) PLAIN
- ( ) ARCHITRAVE
- ( ) SYMMETRIC with CORNER BLOCKS
- ( ) FLUTED
- ( ) FLUTED with CORNER BLOCKS
- ( ) ARCHED OPENINGS: elliptical, tudor

## NOTES:

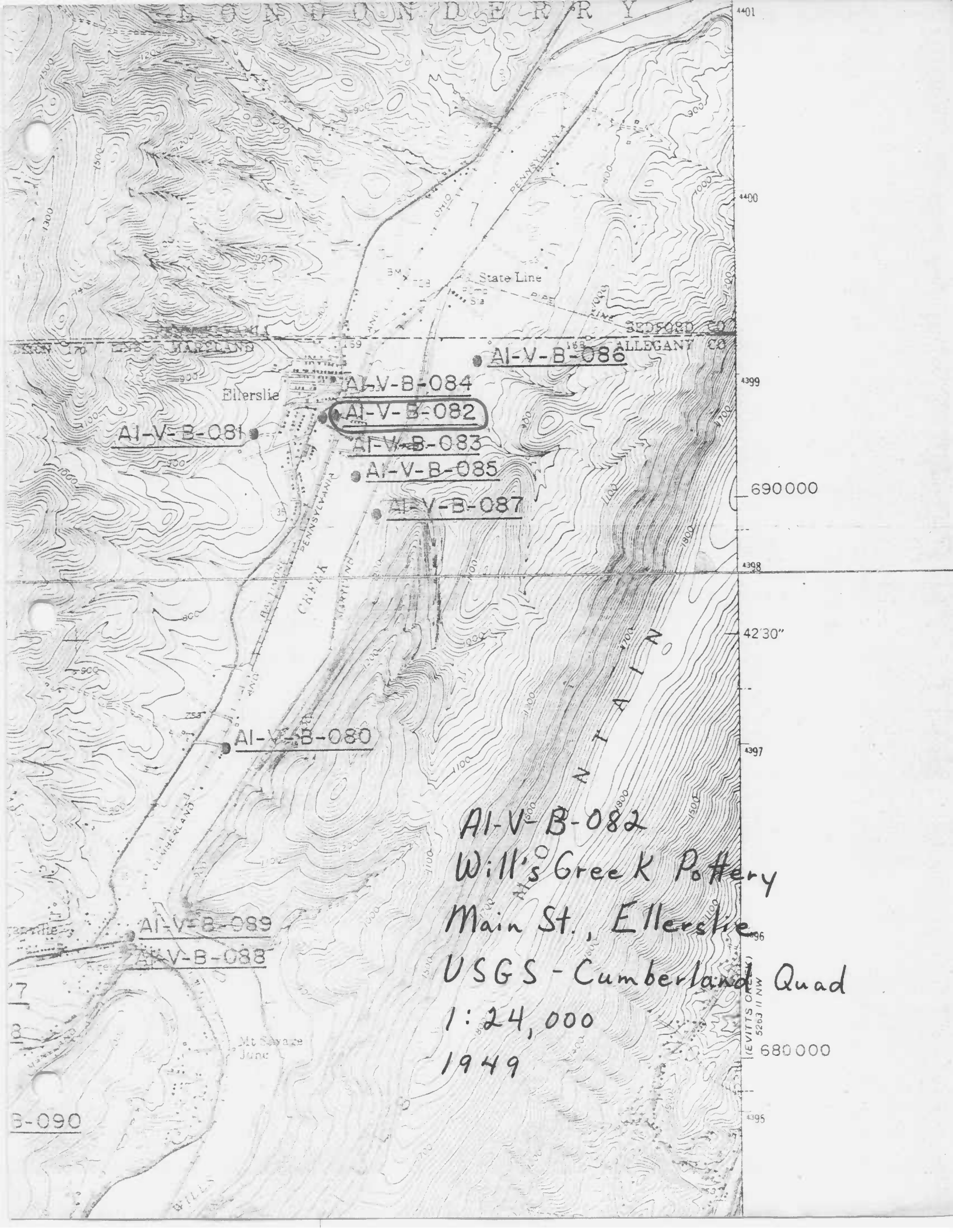
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AI-V-B-081

AI-V-B-084

AI-V-B-082

AI-V-B-083

AI-V-B-085

AI-V-B-087

AI-V-B-080

AI-V-B-089

AI-V-B-088

AI-V-B-086

AI-V-B-082

Will's Greek Pottery

Main St., Ellerslie

USGS - Cumberland Quad

1:24,000

1949

B-090

Mt Savage  
Junc

680 000

690 000

42'30"

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Al-V-B-082

Will's Creek Pottery

Main St., Ellerslie

John E. Nelson

6/15/77

West



A1-V-B-082

Will's Creek Pottery

Main St., Ellerslie

John E. Nelson

6/15 /77

South